



The Eastern Question and the Internationalization of Zionism: Why Zionism didn't turn into a Political Project until the First World War?

Doğu Sorunu ve Siyonizm'in Uluslararasılaşması: Siyonizm Neden I. Dünya Savaşı'na Kadar Politik Bir Projeye Dönüşmedi?

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Abstract: Zionism could not find political support in the international arena until the First World War. All the negotiations that Theodor Herzl and his predecessors had with Germany, Britain and Ottoman Empire at this point were in vain. In this context the aim of this study is to answer the question of why Zionism did not find official political support until World War. Its trying to answer this question through the systemic and domestic factors. The main argument of the study is that the great power policies and the international structure in the context of the Eastern Question were influential on Zionism. In this respect, the most effective reason delaying Zionism's getting support from a great power until 1917 was that the international balance of power based on the Eastern Question.

Keywords: Eastern Question, Zionism, Ottoman Empire, Britain, Germany, International Balance of Power

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Öz: Siyonizm I. Dünya Savaşı'na kadar uluslararası alanda politik destek bulamadı. Theodor Herzl ve seleflerinin bu noktada Almanya, İngiltere ve Osmanlı Devleti ile yaptığı tüm müzakereler sonuçsuz kaldı. Bu bağlamda bu çalışmanın amacı, Siyonizm'in Dünya Savaşı'na kadar neden resmi siyasi destek bulamadığı sorusuna cevap vermektir. Çalışma bu soruya sistemik ve domestik faktörler üzerinden cevap vermeye çalışıyor. Çalışmanın temel argümanı, büyük güç politikalarının ve Doğu Sorunu bağlamındaki uluslararası yapının Siyonizm'in siyasi destek bulma çabası üzerinde etkili olduğudur. Bu bakımdan Siyonizm'in büyük bir güçten destek almasını 1917'ye kadar geciktiren en etkili sebep, uluslararası güç dengesinin Doğu Sorununa dayalı olmasıydı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Doğu Sorunu, Siyonizm, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Britanya, Almanya, Uluslararası Güç Dengesi

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1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to answer the question of why Zionism could not find official political support until First World War. Until the Balfour Declaration, Zionism could not get the support of a great power to establish a "Jewish Home" in Palestine. All the efforts of Theodore Herzl and his successors were in vain. Why did Zionism wait until 1917 to find official support for a Jewish state in Palestine? Answering this question is also important for understanding how the Balfour Declaration came about and the impact of great power politics on the consolidation of Zionism. In this context, the main argument of the study is that the great power policies and the international structure caused by the Eastern Question were influential in the establishment of Zionism in international politics. The Eastern Question, the partition of the Ottoman Empire, was an effective factor in the shaping of the international structure throughout the nineteenth century. In this respect, the most effective reason delaying Zionism's getting support from a great power until 1917 was that the international balance of power based on the Eastern Question. Herzl sought the solution of Zionism in the Eastern Question. At this point, the main goal was to persuade the Ottoman government with the support of one of the great powers or to obtain a concession in Palestine by using Jewish financial and technical skills as a relief to Ottoman financial and technical problems. Thus, Zionism presented itself directly as the solution of the Eastern Question, an important reason for conflict of international politics. The fact that the issue in question was the source of the ongoing conflicts for decades and that it had an extremely complex structure in terms of regional and local dynamics prevented the Zionists from finding political support until First World War. Since it was not possible for international actors to easily perform surgical operations on the Ottoman Empire many attempts of the Zionists were in vain until 1917.

Considering the Eastern Question in particular, the continuation of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire determined the form of support of the great powers to Zionism. The Ottoman territorial integrity, on the one hand, was an obstacle to Zionism in terms of protecting the current interests of Britain, on the other hand, it opened a door for the current Zionism to find international support. In other words the support of Zionism by a great power was closely related to the Eastern Question and the positions of the great powers on this problem. At this point, Britain, following a policy for the protection of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire for a long time, started to change this policy after 1880s. So even though the status quo began to change on behalf of Britain's security, it still needed twenty five years to reach at least an agreement with Russia on the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, Germany had adopted Britain's old policy of protecting territorial integrity of Ottoman Empire on its own behalf. Zionism could not reach its goal in this period depending on then international balances until the moment when Britain perceives the current status quo as a threat to itself. The challenge of Germany forced Britain to produce a new policy in line with its own interests. "Mesopotamia" and "Muslim-Jewish Alliance" projects put forward by the Ottoman Empire, Germany and the Zionists between 1913-1914 seriously threatened the status quo in the Near East and led the British Empire seriously to put the issue of Zionism on its agenda.

Within the scope of a historical methodology, focusing on the period of 1890-1914, this study is trying to explain chronologically and thematically the process until the First World War, when Britain put Zionism on its agenda. In the context of four main problematic, the first part of the study is on Germany's challenge to the current British-based status quo. At this point, the challenge of Germany, the Zionists' search for international support and the reaction of the Ottoman Empire are discussed. The second part will focus on the effort of Zionism to make itself a part of international politics through the Eastern Question. This chapter will focus on the relationship of Herzl and her successors with the Eastern Question and the importance of the Eastern Question for Zionism. There, what the "great power patronage" means for the Zionists will be discussed. Britain's near east and middle east policy and its transformation over the years will be the main problematic of the last chapter. While the study, focuses on the effects of systemic variables on the transformation of Zionism into a political project, it also deals

with the effects of some variables related to the Ottoman domestic politics. Considering that leaders are effective in foreign policy making, Abdulhamid II's foreign policy to maintain the current status quo is another main problematic of this study. The last problematic was the effect of Germany, Ottoman Empire and Zionist relations on Britain's policies towards Zionism during the period, when the Committee of Union and Progress was in power.

2. Guardian of the Status Quo: The Eastern Question and Britain

The Eastern Question represented the most complicated aspect of the rivalry between the great powers during the long nineteenth century. Starting from 1815, Congress of Vienna, the ongoing rivalry over the partition of the Ottoman lands remained on the agenda of international politics (Macfie, 1996: 2-4). The main problem until 1914 was whether the "definitive" collapse of the Ottoman Empire should be postponed or accelerated (al-Hâlidî, 1925: 1-2), as the Palestinian literati and politician Ruhi al-Khalidi, the Ottoman Jerusalem deputy, put it.

Although Europe achieved relative stability after 1815, on the other hand, they developed some military and economic relations with the Ottoman Empire that did not coincide with each other's interests. Probability of a power getting more of the pie kept the danger of a great war alive. The Crimean War was made to prevent Russia from increasing its power in this way. Finding the current status quo suitable for its interests, Britain was in favor of postponing the Eastern Question. Russia and France followed a more hawkish policy on the Orient issue, on the grounds that the current status quo was an obstacle to their own expansionist policies. In this direction, in response to Tsar Alexander I's agenda of sharing the Ottoman Empire as early as 1815, Napoleon III. after he was elected in 1848, put forth a great effort to get a bigger share from the Ottoman heritage (Clayton, 1971: 9-10). Therefore, these two powers were in favor of speeding up the solution of the problem, considering that Britain benefited most from the current status quo.

Britain's relationship with the Ottoman Empire had an important role in shaping the history of modern Europe. Especially after the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, the Ottoman geography was a unique place for the British who wanted to dominate the eastern ports. In order to maintain stability, Britain aimed to prevent a threat to the "independence and integrity" of the Ottoman Empire for a long time after the 1838 Balta Liman Trade Agreement (Ediz, 2016: 109). Participating in the ongoing Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans when necessary, Britain, on the other hand, aimed to prevent Russia from dominating the straits and to keep France away from the Nile Valley and Suez (Yıldızeli, 2018: 215-224). The Naval strategy of the British Empire was to control the Mediterranean and Red Sea and alternative Euphrates-Persian gulf trade routes along the road to India and Persia (Monroe, 1958: 2). The issue of the security of these routes forced Britain to compete with Russia and France throughout the nineteenth century. On the other hand Germany's expansionist policy targeting the Middle East and eventually India, caused Britain to change its alliance strategy which also was determining the fate of the Ottoman Empire.

Consolidation efforts against Germany started with the domination of Aden, the strategic transition zone between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, continued with the British domination of the Persian Gulf and Suez in 1869. During this period, Britain was content with the Ottoman buffer zone role between itself and its rivals (Yıldızeli, 2018: 218). As part of this purpose, Britain prevented the independence of Mehmet Ali Pasha in Egypt and supported the continuation of the Ottoman control in the region. It involved in the Crimean War as an ally of the Ottoman Empire and guaranteed the continuation of the status quo. Until 1880s, British support for the Ottoman territorial integrity served its own interests. When the Straits and Egypt issue were resolved in London in 1841, Britain gained a great advantage in the eastern Mediterranean, and at this point, it consolidated its superiority in the region both in navy and commercial shipping. Especially when the Cairo-Alexandria railway lines were completed in 1854 and the Cairo-Suez railway lines were completed in 1858, the connection to the Indian Ocean was secured (Clayton, 1971: 91).

Britain's stable relation with the Ottoman Empire began to change in the last quarter of the century due to Ottoman financial conditions, Gladstone's radical perception of Abdulhamid II and most importantly,

unstoppable rise of its rivals. After the Russo-Ottoman war of 1878, the British government realized that it was becoming more costly to keep Russia out. Russia's orientation to regions such as the Far East, Central Asia and Afghanistan caused the security priorities of Britain to change. On the other hand capture of Egypt and Cyprus provided the Britain to dominate the regions and nearby areas where it had vital interests. As a result of the pressure of its rivals, Britain did not follow a rigid policy regarding the straits as it used to be. This evident policy since 1885, did not mean that Britain had completely abandoned the policy of Ottoman territorial integrity. Instead of protecting the Ottoman lands as a whole, it focused on areas mostly essential to defense of India (Clayton, 1971: 63). Despite some changes, new status quo still mostly supported the idea of territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. While dominating Egypt and its surroundings, Britain, on the other hand, prevented any political easing that could destabilize regions such as Syria and Iraq. Although Germany's commercial activities in the region from 1890s were a problem for British Empire, it did not reach a quality that would disrupt the status quo until 1910. In the face of these policy changes on the British side, Abdulhamid II's efforts to create a balance by partly replacing Britain with Germany as a foreign policy also ensured the continuation of the current status quo in the Palestine. The Ottoman invitation to Germany as a balancing factor did not allow the Jewish state in Palestine or its support by the British.

2.1. The Real Linqua Franca of the Orient: Superior Force

The Eastern Question played a decisive role in the nineteenth century European balance of power and the formation of the modern world order. The majority of the world's lands were controlled by great powers either directly or in the form of a kind of hegemony during nineteenth century. It can be said that there was a relative consensus on the areas of domination among the great powers, especially the Vienna system's European Concert. The European balance of power disrupted by Napoleon, was relatively restored with the 1815 Congress of Vienna. However, there was a tight competition between the great powers in the issue of sharing the lands of the Ottoman Empire, "the sick man of Europe". The problems about Ottoman lands turned into a major diplomatic crisis due to the Mehmet Ali Pasha case in the 1830s, and a hot conflict with the 1853-1856 Crimean War and the 1878 Ottoman-Russian War. On the other hand for the great powers acting on delicate balances in the past, the rise of Germany meant a serious threat to the existing pro-British international structure. Germany and Italy made the so called balance between the existing great powers one that was easier to upset. The destruction of the balance led to serious wars and diplomatic crises and created great difficulties in maintaining the status quo. In this process, it was only possible to eliminate the problems caused by the Eastern Question and at the same time to gather power over this issue by constantly postponing the solution of the problem. This postponement could only be achieved through the policy of hegemony.

This hegemonic system was based on a so called *protection system* guaranteeing on lands that could not be shared, or where attempts to share had led to wars and diplomatic crises. The great powers were protecting their political, military and economic assets on the Ottoman lands by protecting the peoples in the region. Providing the balance between the Powers, this system on the other hand ensured the continuation of the current status quo. In response to this policy of the great powers, Serbian, Greek, Bulgarian, Armenian, Jewish, Arab and other nationalities in the Ottoman Balkan and Middle East were aware that reaching the goal of having an international presence or of having a state formation in the future could only be achieved by taking the protection of a great power. For this reason, while the protection system was a balance between the great powers, it also offered important opportunities for the people of the region or for those who had a claim (Zionists) to have their own lands. The nation who wanted to be represented in the international arena within the scope of the Eastern Question had to reach the support of at least one great power. Having their independence in the nineteenth century, Serbians, Greeks and Bulgarians achieved this thanks to the patronage of then great powers. Also for the Zionists, taking part in the patronage system was one of the most essential issues in order to reach a state formation in Palestine. Theodor Herzl, founding father of political Zionism was the first person on behalf

of Zionists who understood importance of the protection system for Zionism in the international balance of power based on the Eastern Question.

Due to increasing anti-Semitism in Europe since the middle of the nineteenth century, many ideas and attempts were made for a solution among the Jews (Cohen, 1951: 16-42). But none were as effective as Herzl. Alex Bein, biographer of Herzl in 1934, stated that Herzl, better than anyone else, came up with a solution to the Jewish problem by evaluating the conditions and offerings of the period (Bein, 1970: 70). Herzl's contribution to Zionism was great. His charismatic talents excited the Jewish masses and immeasurably increased the political credibility of Zionism in European capitals. Herzl was the person who institutionalized a so called state without establishing a legitimate state, created state institutions and entered into negotiations like a real state. This gave the Jews the ability to act in the form of a state without being a state (Kornberg, 1980: 226). Although Herzl brought an abstract state form to Zionism with the institutions he created, the biggest problem of political Zionism was how to give a concrete form to the so called state. Herzl was well aware that in order to achieve a real state, it was ultimately necessary to guarantee great power patronage. Herzl's character and way of thinking differs from those who want to find a solution to the *Jewish Question* before him. Organizations such as Leon Pinsker's *Loves of Zion-Hibbath Zion* and *Bilu* at Kharkov University focused on emigration to Palestine. They sent delegations to the Ottoman Sultan and put forward their proposals for the purchase of Palestine. At this point, diplomatic relations were carried out through people such as Sir Edward Cazalet and Laurence Oliphant. From their point of view, diplomatic activities should had been carried out through third parties in order not to attract the sultan's reaction. But all of these were weak initiatives that failed to create successful organization and diplomacy. For this reason, Herzl stands out from the others and is called the founder of political Zionism.

The solution Herzl proposed was that the Jews should be "granted sovereignty over a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the rightful requirements of nation" (Cohen, 1951: 29-42). In this respect, Herzl, who added a nationalist spirit to political Zionism (Murphy, 1950: 290), placed the idea of establishing a state in Palestine, the ancient land of the Jews, at the center of this thought (Zoltan, 2010: 201). Although this was the aim of political Zionism, explanations about what method it should follow or where it should place in the international structure were incomplete. While trying to establish a state in Palestine, the tool was to receive diplomatic protection from the great powers, and if this did not happen, to help the Ottomans modernization, to get the support of the Porte by providing financial and technical assistance. As Kayyali (1977: 98-99) points out, political Zionism inserted itself directly into nineteenth century European imperialism and colonialism. The author states that European colonialism, the failure of European liberal thought, and anti-Semitism feed off each other, and this gave political Zionism freedom of action in the Eastern Question. According to Kayyali, the rise of European colonialism with the increasing search for new colonies, combined with the failure of European liberalism, led to the prevalence of anti-Semitism. Together with Mehmet Ali Pasha, a conflict on Syria arose separately within the Eastern Question and for escaping from anti-Semitism, Jews tried to directly associate themselves with the Syrian Question. Thus, the Jewish Question was placed on the agenda of the Syrian Question.

Herzl believed that anti-Semitic governments were also strong allies of the Zionists. In terms of overpopulation in Europe, the search for power abroad, and the solution to the Jewish problem, political Zionism placed itself in the context of the colonial policy of the great powers (Herzl, 2010: 32). However, Herzl argues that this position within the Eastern Question would lead to the solution of the Jewish problem and on the other hand the development of other eastern peoples, therefore, at the same time, it would also be a solution to the Eastern Question. Only Herzl revealed this understanding of political Zionism adopting the civilizing mission. Herzl, advocating pragmatic solutions, offered a European perspective to Arabs: the Ottoman Middle Ages of Palestine may in a few decades be replaced by Western modernity; the Holy Land may catch up with the more developed contemporary continent in both economic and political respects. In the *Old New Land*, (Herzl 1902) while describing a possible life of Palestine in 1923, he envisaged a historic transformation for the whole region (Zoltan, 2010: 206).

Political Zionism put diplomacy as a tool at this point. Herzl sought to influence diplomats, presidents, ministers, kings, and the highest political circles to intervene in the issue of Zionism. Although he first tried to get the support of Jewish wealthy circles, his priority was the approval of the great powers and the Porte to his own program (Bein, 1970: 70). He clearly placed this goal in his Basel Programme, as well as in his *diaries* and in his book *The Jewish State*. While discussing the technical details in his diaries about the state for the Jews, Herzl explained how the state would become reality as follows: "As soon as we have decided on the land and concluded a preliminary treaty with its present sovereign, we shall start diplomatic negotiations with all the great powers for guarantees" (Herzl, Vol. I, 1960: 40-41). At the same time, as Yapp points out, this would have been possible not only by gaining great benefit from Ottomans collapse, but also by helping them to modernize. In *The Jewish State*, he says. "if the Sultan had given us Palestine, we could have fully undertaken the task of reorganizing Turkey's entire finance. We could have created a border post, a fortress in Turkey against the barbarism from Asia" (Herzl, 2010: 32). From his point of view, the only thing that would untie the *Gordian Knot* was great power patronage and offering the Jews as a solution to the "backwardness" in the east. In addition, he says that after the institutional structuring of the Zionist organization for the Jewish State was completed, if the great powers "declared themselves willing to accept our sovereignty in a part of the World" for the establishment of the state, the Zionist organization could enter into negotiations to have this land. He carried these ideas to the 1897 Basel Congress and included them in the Basel program.

The Basel Programme, formulated by the First Zionist Congress, determined that "The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law". A reading of Herzl's diaries as well as an examination of subsequent Zionist action would reveal that the term *public law* refers to the patronage of the imperialist powers. This patronage would bring a multi-faceted return. Herzl sought a colonial concession with imperial support, since this would secure patronage to make it viable, as well as ensure a sense of trust among the Jews themselves. Herzl predicted that the European powers would support Zionism for one of three main motives: imperialist self-interest, getting rid of the Jews and thus anti-Semitism, or using organized Jewish influence to fight revolutionary movements (Kayyali, 1977: 106). But he did not expect it to turn directly into an independent state formation in the colonial era. In this age, the European great powers would not allow an independent state in the region due to their own interests. The best way for them was a structure under their own protection and patronage. For this reason, political Zionists prioritized protection rather than a state.

Bringing a truly political spirit to Zionism, Herzl left an important legacy to his successors. After meeting with Herzl, Stefan Zweig called himself "King of Zion or great diplomats" (Zweig, 2020: 134). The two adjectives Zweig attributed were political and contain judgment. The Jewish problem was discussed before Herzl, but most of them were movements and others carried out their diplomatic initiatives on their behalf. But Herzl went beyond a movement and turned Zionism into an institution. Realizing that the Jews were far from a political leadership, Herzl brought a political spirit to the movement with his initiatives. He internationalized the Jewish question rather than being local. He realized that internationalization could only be achieved by bringing it to the agenda of great powers. At this point he created a tactical phenomenon when he wrote *The Jewish State*. The aim was tactical; was to bring the issue to the public and to look for allies in the official sense (Vital, 1975: 37-47). So who would be his allies? How should these allies be chosen?

When political Zionism was formed, the four great powers directly related to the Eastern Question, Britain, Germany, France and Russia and the Ottoman Empire at the center of this problem were the main ally candidates. Great power support had to be effective on the Ottomans and these powers had to convince the Ottomans to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. It is seen that Herzl eliminated France since it was fighting with Britain over Syria and not ready to accept a Jewish presence in the region. France, the heart of the enlightenment and one of the civilized nations, was excluded from Herzl's choice of alliance due to the anti-Semitic Dreyfus Affair (Finkelstein, 2013: 38-44) in 1894 (Herzl, 2010: 21-23).

Although Russia was an option, the deep presence of anti-Semitism in Russia and the negative nature of its relations with the Ottoman Empire prevented being an ally. At this point, Germany or Britain, who represent two different poles, came to the fore as ally. Although Britain had historically given great moral support to the Jewish issue, it was limited since its being the guardian of the current international status quo. The first and permanent preference of Herzl and the political Zionists was Germany, with its close connection with the Ottoman Empire in the Eastern Question and its distinctive presence in the Anatolian and Mesopotamian basins. The Kaiser seemed to be the only ally who could force the Sultan to accept German patronage of a Jewish state in Palestine, as he was Abdulhamid II's closest balancer and a chain-breaker in the system against Britain's recent anti-Ottoman policies. Beginning of his diaries, Herzl stated the importance of the Kaiser for political Zionism (Herzl, Vol. I, 1960: 23-25). Likewise, Herzl, counting 17 articles for the establishment of the Jewish state, expressed the 17th article as follows: "To the German Kaiser (request privileges! From him)" (Herzl, Vol. I, 1960: 35).

3. Abdulhamid II: An Emperor in Economic and Political Weakness and Herzl's Quest for Patronage

When Abdulhamid II came to the Ottoman throne, the state was in the midst of major crises in economic, military and social terms. While sitting on the Ottoman throne, he made an agreement with the Young Ottomans and declared the regime as Constitutional Monarchy. However, after the Ottoman-Russian war in 1877-1878, Abdulhamid II dissolved the parliament and suspended the constitution. While he adopted a state administration based in *Yıldız Palace* after 1878, he found himself in great economic and political problems both inside and outside (Georgeon, 2012). The problems created by the economic bottleneck increased with the establishment of the debt administration and thus the economic independence of the state was endangered. The biggest goal of Abdulhamid II and his successors was to get rid of the debt management undermining the independence of the state and to achieve economic independence.

The economic problems became more depressed with a kind of loneliness on behalf of the Ottoman Empire in international politics. Opposition of Gladstone's liberal government to the Ottoman Empire over the Bulgarian issue, as well as the demand of the island of Cyprus as a hostage for protection against Russia, revealed that Britain's traditional policy of protecting Ottoman Empire's territorial integrity began to change. Despite this change in British policy, there was still an opportunity for the Ottomans to maintain a balance between the great powers. Although it was militarily weak in an international structure in which the colonial areas were narrowed, the Ottoman Empire still preserved its character of "a state that was necessary for the continuation of the current status quo". This gave Abdulhamid II a space of action in foreign policy (Yasamee, 2020: 74). Abdulhamid II's rapprochement with Germany was an effort to create a balance in colonial rivalry rather than intensifying the rivalry of the great powers over the region. On the other hand Germany was the factor supporting Abdulhamid II's effort to keep the Ottoman lands together without breaking the status quo (Soy, 2002: 25-33). The British domination of the seas and Russia's domination of Eurasia will divert Germany into the yet undivided Ottoman lands of Anatolia, Syria and Mesopotamia with its rich natural resources for German industry (Ortaylı, 2003: 21). The Ottoman Empire could have a chance to establish a new balance through Germany in response to the loss of Cyprus and Egypt in addition to Britain's ambitions on the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia and France's demands in Lebanon and Syria.

Germany offered the advantage of being a balancer in the policies of the great powers that increased the Ottoman's chance of survival and of integrating the state economically. Wilhelm II believed that Germany would be the dominant power in the world. In this context, Germany wanted to obtain the critical areas for its late industrialization to support the production of cheap and abundant goods and thus penetrated Turkey thanks to the delegations that would help army and civil reform and the Baghdad Railway (Ortaylı, 2003: 58). From the Ottoman point of view, unlike the traditional great power politic, Germany did not have ambitions and it defended the territorial integrity of the empire, aimed to develop and integrate the country with the Baghdad railway project as a balance in Anatolia, Syria,

Palestine and Mesopotamia, increased the chances of the state to survive (Waylet, et al, 2004: 47-51, 141, 165, 176).

The Berlin-Baghdad Railway line reflects Germany's desire to make a place for itself in world politics, and it was also a product of the Ottoman's desire to consolidate the regions where the line passed (Grey, Vol. I, 1925: 81). Although it has been on the agenda since 1888, the Baghdad Railway Line was announced in 1899, and in 1903 the majority of the railway concession financing was given to the Anatolian Railway Company, which was financed by Deutsche Bank (Earle, 1972: 81). With the Hejaz Railway project, which started in 1901, the Sultan was planning to connect the lands reached by the railway lines and surrounding them to the center and revive the region with German capital and technique (Özyüksel, 2016: 8-45). Also, it was desired to restore the river transport in the Euphrates-Tigris Rivers, to accelerate the flow of trade, and to develop Mesopotamia agriculturally with irrigation projects. Wilhelm II's visits to Jerusalem and Damascus in 1898 brought Germany's economic, political and cultural interest to Syria and Palestine (McMeekin, 2011: 32-53). By the way political Zionists led by Herzl tried to be involved in Palestinian politics through Germany's eastern policy and the Ottoman financial problems.

Herzl's involvement in the Eastern Question first took place through Germany. Herzl was very familiar with Germany's interests and policies on Ottoman lands. He also noticed the influence of Wilhelm II over Abdulhamid II as the power to overcome the political loneliness of the Ottoman Empire and was aware of Germany's desire to revive the region and consolidate its power. Herzl presented the Jewish problem as a solution to the Eastern Question in Germany. The Jewish problem and anti-Semitism were at their height in Germany under Wilhelm II. Despite this, considering its interests in the East, Wilhelm II was close to the idea of penetrating the region through German Jews.

Before meeting with the Kaiser, Herzl contacted with the people who could influence the Kaiser and tried to convey the role that Zionism could play in Germany's Near East politics. In this vein, Herzl met with Duke Frederick of Baden, Philipp zu Eulenburg, the German Ambassador to Vienna, and Bernhard von Bülow, the Foreign Secretary (later Chancellor) (Herzl, Vol. II, 1960: 645, 648, 661, 665). While conveying his ideas in his meeting with the Kaiser, he presented the presence of Jews in the Near East, whether German or not, as they would both revitalize the region and repair the backwardness of the Ottomans with their financial and technical power (Herzl, Vol. II, 1960: 665, October 19, 1898) and he wanted the Kaiser to convince the Sultan about this idea (Friedman, 1998: 55-57, 75, 83). Kaiser brought the subject up to the Sultan during his trip to Istanbul and Palestine showed that Wilhelm II was convinced of this idea. The Kaiser thought that the presence of Jews in the region would increase Germany's influence in the area and would be a solution to keep the increasing Jewish Problem in Germany and revolutionary Jewish groups in Germany away from the monarchy. Palestine trip with the Kaiser would not give Herzl what he wanted. Abdulhamid II. did not wish for a new Lebanese problem by disrupting the fragile status quo in Palestine (Hallak, 1978: 10). There was severe opposition to Zionist activities, especially in the Arab geography (Tellioglu, 2017: 209-229). Therefore, the Sultan could not accept this offer. Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Tevfik Pasha joined the Kaiser's journey to Palestine. He wanted to prevent the Kaiser from acting contrary to the status quo in Syria and Palestine. As a result, due to the opposition of Abdulhamid II, the Kaiser withdrew his support for Zionism, and Herzl could not get the support of the great power for Palestine (Stewart, 1974: 28-29).

Abdulhamid II was aware of the delicate balances in Syria and Palestine. Although Britain left the Ottoman Empire alone at certain points, it did not intend to upset the current balances in Syria and Palestine. For this reason, he could not afford the Kaiser's proposal to provoke Britain to mobilize the Arabs against him. Although, some independence attempts emerged in the Arab geography after the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), especially in Syria, the British government opposed these state-building attempt, led by Ahmad al-Sulh and Abdulqadir al-Jazairi. Arab nationalists such as Najib Azuri sought the protection of Britain and France to find support for their projects of establishing an independent state

in the region. But, according to the British government, such formations in the region would disrupt the status quo as Egypt's security was closely related to Syria (Baktikara, 2017: 225, 273-275).

Although British officials protected the Jews who immigrated to the region and ensured that the Jews were able to overcome the Ottoman *Red Ticket* (*Kırmızı Tezkere*), this was never intended to change the status quo in the region.³ When he could not get what he wanted from Abdulhamid II, Herzl turned to London in 1903. The Colonial Secretary of the British government, Joseph Chamberlain, made offers to him for the Jewish Homeland that would not disturb the status quo in Syria and Palestine, such as Cyprus, El-Arish, and Sinai Peninsula. Thus, the British government considers both the local Arab and Ottoman opposition and the regional interests of great powers such as France, Russia and Germany. According to Herzl, Chamberlain told him: "he began by saying that he could speak only about Cyprus. The rest was not his concern but that of the Foreign Office. But as to Cyprus, this was how matters stood: Greeks and Moslems lived there, and he could not crowd them out for the sake of new immigrants. Rather, it was his duty to stand by them". Chamberlain told Herzl that although he supported the Jewish cause, he has to preserve the status quo (Herzl, Vol. IV, 1960: 1361).

Before turning to London in 1903, Herzl sought to obtain a concession on Jewish immigration through the bad Ottoman finances by meeting with Abdulhamid II directly. The Ottoman administration took serious measures against the Jewish immigration started in 1882. Considering the Ottoman internal conditions, Abdulhamid II saw Jewish immigration as objectionable since it would lead to a Jewish government. People like Ebuzziya Tevfik warned at an early period that Zionist movements and migrations were dangerous for the Ottomans (Tevfik, 1305/1888). In this respect, many obstacles and prohibitions against Jewish immigration were put during the period of Abdulhamid II.⁴ The most critical prevention effort was the application of the Red Ticket. The ban, which started being implemented in 1888, was declared a new package of measures titled "The Law on Jews Coming to Palestine to Visit and Migrating to the Ottoman State to Settlement" in 1900. The law stipulated that Jews coming to Palestine must obtain a Red Ticket with their nationality written on them and determined their residence period to be a maximum of three months (Engin, 2013: 42).

Despite all the obstacles, Herzl still thought that he could get a concession from the Ottoman Sultan for Palestine by using the power of Jewish finance for the dire situation of the Ottoman finances. As in the negotiations with the great powers, he promised that the Jewish economic and technical power would be the solution to the Eastern Question and the backwardness. In his book *The Jewish State*, he stated that it would be a solution to the Ottoman finances and the "gangrene" of the Public Debts in return for Palestine. He was also aware that obtaining a land concession under the supervision of the great powers, namely international law, was subject to the permission of the Ottoman Sultan. He came to Istanbul more than five times between 1896 and 1902 and met with many Ottoman rulers, including the Sultan (Öke, 2013: 43-44).

Ottoman debts and the administration of the Public Debts were the main obstacles in front of many political and economic steps that Sultan Abdulhamid II wanted to carry out (Yılmaz, 2013). Tahsin Pasha, in his *Yıldız Memoirs*, wrote about Abdulhamid II's discomfort with debts and his efforts to get rid of them (Tahsin Paşa, 1989: 189-190). Although there was an excellent opportunity to get rid of the discomfort of the Sultan, a negative response was given to Herzl's proposal in 1896 to pay the Ottoman debts to Palestine (Herzl, Vol. I, 1960: 371-371). However, this would not discourage Herzl, and he was accepted into the presence of the Sultan on May 19, 1901 after the Friday Pray, through the Jewish Turkologist Arminius Vambery. In this meeting, Herzl could not reach a clear conclusion for the

³ The proposal presented to the Sublime Porte by the British embassy in 1892 for the protection of Jewish immigrants by Britain, and the Sublime Porte rejected this offer because it would lead to an unfortunate outcome (Jewish Government); Ottoman Archives (BOA), İ.DH, 1271/99922 (April 13, 1308).

⁴ On September 28, 1887, it was ordered that the Jews who came for a visit be given a passport for a maximum of one month after the visit. BOA, HR.SYS, 411/77 (September 28, 1887), the instruction to prevent their settlement due to the increase in the Jewish population, BOA, DH.MKT, 2620/62 (October 1, 1908). Denying permission to sell land to Jews, BOA, MV, 101/10 (September 5, 1900).

proposal (BOA, Y..PRK.TŞF, 6/50 (June 18, 1901) of arranging the debts to establish a company contributing to the agricultural, industrial, and commercial development of Syria, Anatolia, and Palestine (Tahsin Paşa, 1989: 110-111). But the Sultan asked him to prepare a report (BOA, Y..PRK.ML., 23/8 (July 17, 1902) for the Public Debts (BOA, Y..A...HUS, 430/50 (July 15, 1902); BOA, Y..A...HUS, 432/34 (July 17, 1902) and the consolidation of the Ottoman debts. With the intensification of the financial crisis, Herzl was invited by İbrahim and İzzet Bey to Istanbul to sit at the negotiation table for the consolidation of debts. Meanwhile, the government was negotiating with the French for the consolidation of debts. In response to debt consolidation, called the Ruvier project, Herzl presented his plan. In this context, he made a 32 million commitment against the 30 million pledge offered by Mösyö Ruvier and in return offers to allow Jewish settlement around Haifa in addition to Mesopotamia (BOA, Y..PRK.ML., 23/8 (July 17, 1902); Herzl, Vol. I, 1960: 1290-1295) However, due to Herzl's inadequacy in financial matters and, his constant keeping of Palestine on the agenda, the increasing opposition to Zionism in Syria and Palestine, his plan was not accepted. Herzl could not find what he expected from Abdulhamid II. He started negotiations with the British government and turned to alternative plans such as Uganda. After Herzl died in 1904, his successors who took over political Zionism, started getting closer to the Young Turks. When Herzl received a negative response from the Sultan in 1896, Newlinsky (Herzl, Vol. I, 1960: 372) and his other friends presented him an information that the Young Turks supported the Zionist projects and accused their government of not paying attention to these projects (Herzl, Vol. II, 1960: 889). Indeed, after 1904, Herzl's successors took into account the recommendations to get close to the Young Turks.

4. Young Turks, Dönme and Zionists: A New Chance

With the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy on 23 July 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) took over the administration and this radically changed both the internal and international politics of the Empire. The main goal of the CUP was the modernization of the Empire. The CUP administrators were aware that the Ottoman Empire's role in global politics was diminishing (Carpos, 2015: 13). The so called objectives of the CUP were to ensure the continuity of the independence of the empire, overcome the economic turmoil threatening the independence, and prevent foreign state interventions. In this vein, the empire had to be politically strengthened and modernized for the salvation of the crumbling empire at the heart of the Eastern Question. The solutions proposed by the CUP administration were as follows: First of all, it was to close the issue of minorities, which was the most important tool of foreign intervention, together with the parliament established with the constitutional administration. The "liberalization" of the empire was planned to provide both social peace and foreign support. Secondly, the economic independence of the country by creating a middle class that would dominate the domestic economy (Çiçek, 2010).

There were serious obstacles in front of political and economic independence. Since the empire was still in financial trouble, there was not enough wealth to implement the modernization projects of the CUP. Especially, essential revenue items were under the control of the Public Debts administration. The CUP, therefore, tended to debts from foreign powers for modernization project. Thus the recovery of the empire was de facto in the hands of the European Great Powers. Fiscal advantages largely emanated from the Europeans and again return to them (Kent, 2013: 14).

CUP administrators were calculating that due to their liberal administration, they would receive support from Britain and France to protect the Empire's territorial integrity and ensure its economic development. The CUP appointed the pro-British Kamil Pasha as grand vizier on 6 August (Ahmad, 2020: 9). Despite their pro-British policy, the CUP's desire for economic, military and political independence and its dream of becoming the Near East's Japan had some harmful aspects on Britain's Near East policy. Britain was committed to maintain the status quo for a long time and its understanding of the status quo was that the Ottomans, in their favor, acted as a buffer between their interests and the forces threatening them. The British government, therefore, did not want the CUP, which wanted more than being a mere buffer zone, to set an example for Young Egyptians or Young Indians in the future. Both the CUP's attitude and the

balances observed in international politics (England-France-Russia) would slowly bring the CUP closer to Germany (Ahmad, 2020: 14).

Zionists were another force adapting itself to the CUP's efforts for independence and modernization and their situation in international politics. After the obstacles placed in front of the Zionists during the reign of Abdulhamid II, the Young Turks' takeover of the government was a new hope for them. It seemed easier to obtain privileges from the CUP administration, which was composed of different factions, as opposed to the Abdulhamid II's regime, which gathered power on the one hand (Öke, 1991: 128). The presence of a serious Masonic and convert/*dönme* or Zionist figures in the CUP caused David Wolffsohn, who became the head of the World Zionist Organization after Herzl, and his friends to turn their focus to Istanbul. The existence and efforts of people close to the CUP, such as Emanuel Karasu, Nesim Ruso, Nesim Mazliyah, Vitali Faraci Efendi, and Behor Efendi, who was included in the Parliament or the Ayan Assembly, gave hope to the Zionists. Dr. Victor Jacobson made the first attempt and was appointed as the head of the Anglo-Levantine Banking Company in Istanbul. He started his efforts to win the Ottoman public opinion in the center and the countryside. Jacobson's first job was to organize the publication of favorable articles about Zionism in the columns of the French-language newspapers *Aurore*, *Ladino El-Tiempo*, and Hebrew *Ha-mevasser* (Naeh, 2016: 203-216). Also, he tried to win Ottoman intellectuals like Celal Nuri. Ruso and Mazliyah, who joined their ranks, met with Ahmet Rıza, Enver, Talat and Nazım Bey. The most important trump card of the Zionists in convincing the CUP was the financial, industrial, and technical contribution of the Jews to the Ottoman Empire. Ahmet Rıza said that the Zionists contributions to the state would be significant at this point, and therefore there was no harm in their emigration (Öke, 1991: 130).

The expectations of the CUP and the social network they had also allowed the Zionists to get stronger. The leaders of the CUP, organized through Masonic lodges, were in direct contact with Jewish and Zionist circles. Karasu, who was a member of the masonic lodges in Thessaloniki, supported opposition organizations. Talat Pasha, who became the Minister of Internal Affairs in 1917, entered the lodge in 1903, and Talat formed a long-term relationship with Karasu. In addition, Haim Nahum Efendi, who replaced Moshe Halevi as the chief rabbi, established close relations with the Young Turks. He was a liberal with close ties to the Alliance Israélite, widely respected by the Young Turks. An influential CUP member, Talat Pasha taught Turkish at the Alyans School in Edirne. Likewise, Vitali Faraci Efendi (Istanbul deputy) was one of the leading lawyers of the capital and was advising the tobacco director. Nisim Mazliyah, a lawyer and trader, was İzmir deputy in the parliament three times and an active unionist. Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha, who was the general inspector of Thessaloniki, Kosovo, Monastery in 1908, benefited from Mazliyah's advice in matters related to international conflict. Mazliyah was arrested during the anti-CUP administration of Kamil Pasha and was released in 1913 with the return of the CUP. He maintained his relationship with Talat Pasha until 1921. Nisim Raso had close links with the Zionists. He took part in the team of Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha and later became a close friend of Javid Bey when he was the Minister of Finance (Ahmad, 2017: 130-134). Despite showing great loyalty to the Empire, they did their best to gain privileges for the Zionists from the CUP administrators.

Zionists had many privileges in this positive atmosphere. First of all, in 1908, under the leadership of Jacobson, together with Rosu and Mazliyah, they opened the first Ottoman Zionist branch. After Nahum and Rosu's meetings with Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha, the pasha was convinced of the contribution of the Jews to the Ottoman industry and finance. After the meeting, the Pasha first abolished the Red Ticket given to the Jews when they entered Palestine, and then the Zionists were allowed to buy land in Palestine (Öke, 2013: 113). The meeting of Jacobson and Talat Pasha on the sale of land in exchange for 1 million French gold (Fishman, 2019: 160), as well as the negotiations between Chief Rabbi and Talat Pasha on removing the obstacles in front of the immigration of foreign Jews to Palestine (BOA, DH.EUM.THR, 104/24 (November 1, 1909), led to rumors that the CUP would provide serious concessions to the Zionists. Despite these developments, the cabinet convened in June 1909, upon local reactions, again banned the immigration of Jews to Palestine and the purchase of land and revert to the application of the Red Ticket again (Öke, 1991: 136). Despite this, the Zionists continued their activities. Nahum Sokolow, Secretary-

General of the World Zionist Organization, came to Istanbul on October 19 to raise public opinion on immigration to Palestine. He was carefully monitored in Istanbul and Izmir, and he was asked to be deported if he made a disgraceful act (BOA, DH.EUM.THR, 92/16 (November 13, 1909); BOA, DH.EUM.THR, 27/66 (October 28, 1909). Meanwhile Israel Zangwill, the founder of the Jewish Territorial Organization, suggested that the Jews of Russia and Romania should be settled in Mesopotamia in exchange for becoming Ottoman citizens, serving in the military, accepting Turkish as their mother tongue, and helping pay off Ottoman debts. Negotiations continued throughout 1910, and the project did not implement due to British opposition (Tellioglu, 2015: 22).

A number of developments after 1908 affected CUP's policy on Zionism. Immediately after the new regime in 1908, Bulgaria declared its independence on 5 October, Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina the next day and Crete decides to join Greece on 6 October. Counter-revolution movement in 1909 and the events that started and followed each other with the Libyan War in 1911 and the Balkan War of 1912-1913 increased the CUP's fear on minorities. The situation was in a political stalemate, but the CUP administration was also aware of the economic investments that the Jews would offer. For this reason, the absolute compatibility of Zionism with the Ottoman Empire had confirmed at the Zionist congresses in 1909 Hamburg and 1911 Basel, and Wolffsohn declared that the movement would act in harmony with Ottoman policies. At the Congress in 1911, the center of the Zionist movement was moved from Vienna to Berlin (Cohen, 1951: 61). The Macedonian, Anatolian and Mesopotamian proposals presented to Zionists by the Ottomans were not attractive but constituted a forward point. Although there was fear that Zionism would lead to foreign interventions, possible technical and financial contributions of the Jews to the empire were more prominent in the administration of the CUP.

4.1. Local Reaction: State within the State

Due to the intervention of the great power and the fears that the Zionists would be in an independent state in Palestine, the CUP returned to the old practices since 1909. But this did not mean the end of taking advantage of the Zionists. Beginning in 1909, personalities such as Rıza Tevfik started propaganda activities on plans to settle immigrants in Mesopotamia in order to penetrate the Baghdad Railway line and develop Mesopotamia. In particular, the articles of Celal Nuri and Ahmet Agayef referred to the importance of the Jews in the modernization of Mesopotamia (Öke, 1991: 146). Also, Moiz Kohen, known as Munis Tekinalp, did not find any contradiction in terms of the immigration of Jews to Palestine in the articles he wrote in *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, *Zaman*, and *Yeni Asır* newspapers and supported various pro-Zionist projects (Fishman, 2016: 98). On the other hand personalities such as Ebüzziya Tevfik and Şehbenderzade Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi were informing the public with their writings and directing their opposition to the CUP on this point. With the articles he wrote in series for the *Hikmet* newspaper between 1911 and 1912, Filibeli sharply expressed his opposition to the fact that German Jews used *pan-Turanism* to deceive the Turks and in this way, they were seeking to expropriate Palestine (*Hikmet Gazetesi*, August 5, 1911, p. 1; August 6, p. 1; (August 8), p. 1; August 9, p. 1-2; August 10, p. 1-2; August 11, p. 1-2; August 14, 1912, p. 1; August 16, p. 2; August 19, p. 3-4; August 21, p. 1; August 22, p. 1; September 17, p. 4; September 18, p. 3; September 26 1912, p. 1-2). Ebüzziya Tevfik continued his opposition with his articles in *Mecmua-i Ebüzziya* and warned the government to be careful about the danger of Zionist activities (*Mecmua-i Ebüzziya*, 22 Şevval 1329; 19 Şevval 1329; 12 Cemaziyelevvel 1329; 25 Zilkade 1329). Also, in his writings in *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, Ebüzziya menacingly rejected Kohen's support for settling in Iraq (Fishman, 2016: 99-100).

Another focus of opposition between Zionism and the CUP was the debates in the Parliament (Meclis-i Mebusan) in March and May (1911). The beginning of these discussions was based on the fact that Zionism was trying to seize the Ottoman Empire secretly. In the first phase of the talks, Minister of Finance Javid Bey, a convert, was accused of supporting the Zionists and even favored the Jewish capitalists in borrowing. Likewise, in the discussion between İsmail Hakkı Bey, Emanuel Karasu, and Nisim Mazliyah, Hakkı Bey criticized Javid Bey on financial points; he pointed to demographic change

and land expropriation of the Zionists in Jerusalem, Damascus, and areas surrounding it. When criticized for the relations of government circles with the Zionists, Talat Pasha responded that they did not accept their demands about Palestine in the meeting had been held between Zionists and the government. Edirne MP Rıza Tevfik, Aydın MP Ubeydullah Efendi, Jerusalem MP Ruhi el-Halidi Bey, Hama MP Abdulhamit Zehrabi Efendi and many other deputies participated in the discussion (*Zabit Ceridesi*, 1/3, 16 Şubat 1326: 331-346) Upon these discussions, Kohen expressed his concern that anti-Semitism increased in Turkey due to the Zionism issue in 1911 (Fishman, 2016: 101, Muhsin, 1329/1911).

The session held on May 16, 1911, in which Zionism was the main agenda, was the session in which both the opposition was at the highest level and the government was the most nervous. The point that made this session so important was that the criticism that the government was not doing enough about Zionism came from the deputies from Arap geographies, such as Ruhi al-Halidi (Jerusalem), Sait el-Huseyni Bey (Jerusalem), (Hasan) Şükrü el-Aseli Bey (Damascus) and Halit el-Berazi Efendi (Syria) (*Zabit Ceridesi*, 1/6, 3 Mayıs 1327: 553-581). The debates were mainly due to the lands purchased by the Zionists in Palestine, and their desire to establish a Jewish State, including Iraq, Jerusalem, and Syria (*Zabit Ceridesi*, 1/6, 3 Mayıs 1327: 574). The problems were caused by the fact that most of the Jews with a population exceeding 100 thousand were not Ottoman citizens (*Zabit Ceridesi*, 1/6, 3 Mayıs 1327: 557) and, due to inadequacy of government policies, the Jews took up arms in the region and assumed an autonomous structure. Ruhi al-Halidi Bey pointed out the magnitude of the danger with his statement that “they have the idea of establishing a state within the state” (*Zabit Ceridesi*, 1/6, 3 Mayıs 1327: 558). After that, the discussions increased in intensity and shifted to different directions and came to the Arab issue with the words of Halit al-Berazi Efendi. He pointed out the revolts and disturbances among the Arabs in Yemen, Hejaz, and the surrounding areas, especially by addressing the distance of the Arab population from the empire and Istanbul. He even said that Britain used officials who knew the local language in its possessions (India, Sudan, Egypt) while voicing that the status of Arabs should be raised (*Zabit Ceridesi*, 1/6, 3 Mayıs 1327: 575-578). It was an issue disturbing the government where criticism was increased and even turned into the Arab issue. It was a point that the CUP could not afford to offend the Arabs, one of the two main elements of the empire, after the territorial losses due to the former and ongoing ethnic separatism.

The idea of Arab nationalism, which gained strength in the 1850s, found the opportunity to express its ideas more easily in the liberal environment provided by the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy in 1908 (Antonius, 2021). These ideas, based mainly on the improvement of the Arabs situation in the empire and a decentralized administration, and the Arabs taking more place in the administration. Although they did not aim to break away from the Empire, these demands were enough to disturb the CUP. This caused the CUP administrators to act more cautiously. The disturbances reflected in the Palestinian press reveal the potential of the problem. Many Arab anti-Zionists kept the Palestinian issue on the agenda, and the Ottoman administration could not ignore it (Ays, 2018: 287-310) Najib Nassar, who was the editor of the *Al-Karmil* newspaper and published the first book on Zionism in Arabic, was the voice of the anti-Zionist discourse in the region (Mandel, 1976: 85). *Al-Karmil*'s publications on Zionist activities had a negative impact on the government. Nassar's openly voicing of the Zionists' activities in the region and their unlawful treatment of the local people was considered “nasty” by the CUP (BOA, DH.MKT, 2825/41 (May 27, 1909). Yunus al-Huseyni, who wrote critical articles in *Al-Munadi*, focused on the empowerment of the Jews by talking about the weakness of the Ottoman Empire in his article (*Al-Munadi*, February 2, 1912: 2-3). Also, on March 26, 1912, in the editorial of *Al-Munadi*, there was an article harshly criticizing some state officials as “ignorant” who praised the refugees and their contribution to Palestine (*Al-Munadi*, March 26, 1912: 1-2). Similarly, the editorial policy of the *Palestine* newspaper, which started its publication life in 1911, about the Zionists/Jews was disturbing the government (Tellioğlu, 2017: 227). In July 1911, he was complaining about the regional ambitions of the great powers, the weakness of the Ottoman Empire and the growth of the Zionists in the region both in terms of land and population. Moreover, he criticized Istanbul by saying that the Zionists did not expect any opposition or obstacles from the government in achieving their goals and even perceive them as their greatest helpers (*Filistin*, July 22, 1911: 2). When the criticism increased in the 26-27

August 1911 issues, Istanbul government warned the Palestinian newspapers using "aggressive language" against the government (BOA, DH.SYS, 57/33 (24 Eylül 1327). The newspaper's publication life was requested to be suspended for a while due to the constant increase in criticism (BOA, DH.ŞRF, 40/39 (April 18, 1914). The Arab Congress convened in Paris in 1913 and the nationalist Arab delegates expressed their desire for the CUP to take an effective role in the management of the imperial affairs of the Arabs. From CUP'S point of view, this stirring among the Arabs (Antonius, 2021: 95-97) prevented the government from taking a serious step on the issue of Zionism. Due to search for balance outside and opposition inside the Empire, the Unionists could not achieve their goal of benefiting from Jewish financial and technical knowledge. Also, Zionism had to postpone its ambitions for Palestine a little bit later.

4.2.A Shot in the Locker: Muslim-Jewish Alliance

Until 1913, due to the attitudes of both international and local actors and the obstacles placed in front of them, the Zionists could not reach their desired aim. But in late 1913 and 1914, the situation started to turn in their favor. The CUP was ready to give them the necessary support, started to negotiate with the Arabs. The CUP fell from power between July 1912 and January 1913. During this period, which lasted more than a year, the empire suffered great losses due to the Italian War in Libya and the Balkan Wars. In addition to these developments, the Zionists started negotiations again, presenting themselves as a solution to the integrity and modernization of the empire. The project of enlivening and developing Mesopotamia with Jewish settlements, which was put forward in 1912, was supported by intellectuals such as Celal Nuri. But, the project was left unfinished due to the strong opposition of the British, who perceived this as German-Zionist cooperation (Öke, 1991, 143-145). The partnership of the Zionists with the CUP this time was about to create more serious problems for Britain.

For the CUP, which wanted to modernize the empire in the example of modern Japan, Palestine's advancing agriculture, developing small industry and Western region appearance through the Zionists presented a good example of reaching its goals. Reports from officials in Palestine such as Muhdi Bey (Mandel, 1976: 135) and Mecit Şevket Bey spoke of the benefits of Jewish resettlement (Öke, 1991: 181). Likewise, in the book *Vilayeti Beirut*, written in 1908, states that "the immigrants who came to the region from Russia and Romania established villages, which are the most beautiful examples of their kind" (el-Temimi, et al., 1325/1908: 30). As stated earlier, the contribution of the Jews to the Ottoman modernization was stated by the Ottoman officials and intellectuals. In Arab newspapers, it is seen that there are statements and civil servants who approach this issue positively (*Al-Munadi*, March 26, 1912: 1-2). Although the CUP needed the financial power of the Zionists, it could not confront the Arabs. Therefore, they had to bring the Arabs and Zionists together without being directly involved. First, a meeting took place between Chief Rabbi Nahum and Talat Pasha. To achieve a rapprochement between the Arabs and the Zionists, Esad Pasha and Ahmed Agayef meet with Dr. Jacobson on behalf of Talat Pasha by referring to a "Muslim-Jewish Alliance" (Öke, 1991: 185). The proposal made by the CUP can be evaluated within the general framework of "Islamist" politics. Emphasizing Islamism to keep the Empire together, the CUP sought to consolidate this alliance with the financial aid of the Jews. The combination of Pan-Judaism and Pan-Islamism that would aid Ottoman modernization was hoped to shield against the Christian West. The Unionists, who thought that the contribution of the Jews to the development of the region would please the Arabs, calculated that there would be no negative reaction from the Arabs. Dr. Jacobson was very happy with this offer. For this reason, Zionist publications have started to be published on the partnership between Pan-Judaism and Pan-Islam, both of which suffer from the Christian World (Mandel, 1976: 146).

At the 11th Zionist Congress held in Vienna in September 1913, the Muslim-Jewish Alliance project gained momentum with the group's support led by Dr. Ruppin, who advocated rapprochement with the Arabs. As a matter of fact, after the relations with the Arabs, it was understood that there were people close to this project in the Arab public (Öke, 1991: 186), just as members of the Hizb al-Lamarkazziya al-

Idariyya al-'Uthmani (Ottoman Party for Administrative Decentralization) (Mandel, 1976: 150). David Barakat, the editor of Al-Ahram, stated that the entente between the Arabs and the Zionists would be beneficial to both sides. İbrahim Selim and Rashid Rida, who became members of the Hizb al-Lamarkazziya after Barakat, emphasized the importance of the entente between Arabs and Jews. Despite his negative feelings towards the Unionists, Rida, in his articles in the Al-Menar newspaper, stated that the Jews surrounded by Arabs had to come to terms with us and that the Arab geography, especially Syria, which had been in a state of decline for a long time, could develop again with the knowledge and science of the Jews (Kasimia, 1973: 152; *Al-Ahram*, 18.06.1913; al-Momai, 2021: 145-150, Tauber, 2021: 405-424). Also, a Beirut-based newspaper named *İttihad-ı Osmaniyye* states that Arab and Jews could act together and the Western knowledge of the Jews would be beneficial to the region (Kasimia, 1973: 160; *al-İttihad al-Osmaniyye*, 23.02.1913). Menachem Ussishkin, Director of the Jewish National Fund, held an emergency meeting in Berlin in April 1913 on Arab-Jewish rapprochement. He explained his support for the project as "We will vaccinate the Eastern cities with a new vaccine (West)" (Kasimia, 1973: 160; *Al-Ahram*, 22.03.1913). After the support of Refik al-Azm and Abdulhamid Zehravi, leaders of Hizb al-Lamarkazziya, talks between the parties started. Meanwhile, the Ottoman government informed the governor of Jerusalem and the governor of Beirut on October 24, 1913, that the Red Ticket application was terminated in order to enable the Jews to act more comfortably and to show their support for the project. Towards the end of January 1914, the Government informed the Zionists that it would lift the restriction on Jews visiting Palestine for only three months and the ban on purchasing immovable property (Öke, 1991: 189-190). As a result of these developments, the editor of *Le Jeune Turc* newspaper S. Hochberg met with the officials of Hizb al-Lamarkazziya and al-Islahiyya (Beirut Reform Movement) in May 1913, and a positive result was reached between the parties in the negotiations (Kasimia, 1973: 162, 191-211, eş-Şannak, 2005: 551). Hochberg, who closely followed the First Arab Congress, had a meeting with the President of the Congress Abudhamid al-Zehravi, on entente, and after the congress a secret entente agreement was made with Zehravi. Zehravi accepted this entente, taking into account the Jewish contribution to the region, on the condition that the Jews accept Ottoman citizenship and not displace the natives. In his interview with *Le Jeune Turc*, he said that the Jews of the world would contribute greatly to the improvement of the underdeveloped Syria region (Mandel, 1976: 159-160).

Despite all these efforts and explanations, the "Muslim-Jewish Alliance" project and the negotiations between Jews and Arabs did not succeed because of British opposition. To not leave Arabs and Jews in the hands of the CUP-Zionist and Germany⁵, Britain sought to attract Arabs and Jews to its side. Since 1909, the existence of the projects that the Unionists and Zionists put together and the reformation of the Ottoman Empire had been a matter of discomfort. Britain's positioning of Germany as the power behind the Unionist-Zionist alliance shaped Britain's relations with the Zionists and the Arabs. However, this balance, which tried to be maintained for a while after the constitution's declaration in 1908, underwent a radical transformation after the Libyan war and the Balkan war. After this point the CUP leaning more on German power, supported Germany to gain strength in the region in their favor. The fact that Germany gained too much power did not allow the Eastern Question to continue the structure on which it was based, and the structure began to dissolve. Under these conditions, the internationalization of Zionism did not take place until the First World War.

⁵ For the "Muslim-Jewish Alliance" project and the opposition the British government see (Berridge, 2008); FO, 424_228, Affairs of Asiatic Turkey and Arabia, Part III, (Lowther to Grey, August 14, 1911), p. 66; FO, 424_226, Affairs of Asiatic Turkey and Arabia, Part I, (Mr. Marling to Grey, 2 January 1911), p. 20; FO, 424_226, Part I, [Dangers of Zionism, CUP and German alliance to British interests in the Near and Middle East; Lowther to Grey, February 4, 1911, Lowther's report to Sir Grey on March 17, 1913, February 22, 1911 (No. 121), March 7 (No. 143), April 24 (No. 271), May 17 (No. 346)]; FO, 424_226, Part I, (Lowther to Grey, February 13, 1911); FO, 424_228, Part III: 38, 109; Consul of Jerusalem to Sir G. Lowther, October 6, 1911, FO, 424_229, Part IV: 24; FO, 424_237, Part IX, (Lowther to Grey, March 14, 1913): 102; FO, 424_238, Part X, (Lowther to Grey, March 17, 1913): 22; FO, 424_240, Part XII, (Mallet to Grey, December 21, 1913): 271[L. Mallet, in his report to Gray on December 21, 1913, states that the Red Ticket application was terminated, and as a result, Jewish capital is expected to flow to the Ottoman Empire.]

5. Conclusion

The internationalization of Zionism or its nationalization just as other nations, has attracted significant attention in both history and international relations literature. However, most of the studies focus on the Balfour Declaration and the internal transformation of Zionism. The international balance of power and the Eastern Question, in which Herzl and his predecessors placed themselves at the point of becoming a state, are a major deficiency in these studies. As Herzl reveals both in his diaries and in his book *The Jewish State*, the great power struggle occupies an essential place in the internationalization of Zionism. Remarkably, the Zionists, who associated themselves with the Eastern Question, to be included in the protection of a great power in Syria and Palestine had been the main target. However, for the Zionists, placed themselves in the Eastern Question through the protection system and civilizing mission, the biggest obstacle at the point of internationalization was the great power struggle working on a delicate balance. As a matter of fact, the negotiations of many Zionist leaders, especially Herzl, with Germany, Britain and the Ottoman Empire did not succeed and their efforts constantly hit the walls of the international balance of power. Since the 1890s, all the negotiations between the Zionist leaders with Abdulhamid and the Unionists were stuck in the balance of power that Britain was protecting. The internationalization of Zionism under the protection of a great power became possible with the deterioration of the international balance of power in 1914. As a matter of fact, the Zionists, who obtained British protection during the First World War (1917), were able to complete the becoming a state process under the mandate of the British Government, which was established in 1922 in the post-war period. Why did Zionism wait until 1917 to find official support for a Jewish state in Palestine? We can say that the answer to the question is largely shaped by the international balance of power and great power policies. As a result, a serious revision is necessary in studies that mostly focus on the ideological development and historical transformation of Zionism. The issue needs to be re-evaluated within the framework of the patronage system, the Eastern Question, the international balance of power and the relationship of great power policies with the internationalization of Zionism in the nineteenth century.

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